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ACTION EA-13

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 NSC-10 NSCE-00 INR-05 CIAE-00 NSAE-00
OMB-01 PM-03 DODE-00 UPW-01 PRS-01 T-01 GAC-01 CU-03
RSR-01 RSC-01 /056 W

R 011118Z JUN 72
FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7560
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY SAIGON
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
USDEL FRANCE
CINCPAC
COMUSMACV

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SUBJECT: KHMER PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN

REF: STATE 095237

1. SUMMARY. ARMY AND GOVERNMENT CANVASSERS CONTINUE HEAVY PRESSURE FOR A LON NOL VICTORY. IN TAM WARNS PEOPLE NOT TO CREDIT REPORTS OF HIS WITHDRAWAL ON EVE OF ELECTION. KEO AN'S CAMPAIGN IS NON-EXISTENT, BUT HE MAY STILL GET A SYMPATHY VOTE. WAR AND THE DESIRE TO BE ON THE WINNING SIDE PREDISPOSE THE MAJORITY TO VOTE FOR THE MARSHAL. END SUMMARY.

2. DURING THE WEEK LON NOL SUPPORTERS HAVE GREATLY INCREASED THE TEMPO OF THEIR CAMPAIGN, WITH THE MARSHAL HIMSELF GETTING OUT IN THE HUSTINGS FOR THE FIRST TIME. ON MAY 28, THE MARSHAL AND HIS ENTOURAGE FLEW TO KOMPONG CHAM, IN TAM'S STRONGHOLD, TO CAMPAIGN THERE. ON MAY 30 THE MARSHAL PUBLISHED HIS PROGRAM (SEPTET), EMPHASIZING THE NATIONAL UNITY THEME.

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HIS PAST SERVICES TO THE NATION, AND CONTINUATION OF PRESENT POLICIES. TAKING A MORE DEFINITE STAND THAN HIS OPPONENTS, LON NOL RULED OUT A PEACE THAT WOULD VIOLATE NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY. MEANWHILE GOVERNMENT TEAMS, LED BY THE MORE POPULAR MINISTERS, HAVE BEEN FLYING TO PROVINCIAL CENTERS TO SPEAK FOR LON NOL. NUMEROUS RALLIES HAVE BEEN ORGANIZED FOR HIM IN PHNOM PENH, AND ALMOST EVERY SHOP AND WALL IN THE CAPITAL BEARS A POSTER OF THE MARSHAL.

3. TO COUNTER OPPOSITION PROPAGANDA CONCERNING THE MARSHAL'S HEALTH, PRO-GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPER LE REPUBLICAIN PUBLISHED ON MAY 31 FAVORABLE HIGHLIGHTS OF A MEDICAL EXAMINATION OF THE MARSHAL BY MACV SURGEON GENERAL BERNSTEIN. LON NOL ALSO SUMMONED BACK FROM PARIS THE PRINCIPAL ARCHITECT OF HIS KHMER-MON ETHNIC THEORIES, KENG VANSAK, TO ATTEMPT TO CUT INTO IN TAM'S SUPPORT AMONG STUDENTS AND TEACHERS.

4. THE AFFAIR OF THE TWO SELF-DESCRIBED LON NOL EMISSARIES WHO CONTACTED IN TAM ON WHAT POSTS HE WOULD BE WILLING TO ACCEPT IN RETURN FOR WITHDRAWAL REBOUNDED AS PRO-LON NOL NEWSPAPERS DESCRIBED THEM (PLAUSIBLY) AS IN FACT EMISSARIES OF IN TAM TO LON NOL, GIVING THE IMPRESSION THAT IN TAM WAS READY TO THROW IN THE SPONGE. IN TAM ANGRILY WARNED THE VOTERS NOT TO BELIEVE THE REPORTS THAT MAY CIRCULATE ON THE EVE OF THE ELECTION TO THE EFFECT THAT HE HAS WITHDRAWN, DISAPPEARED OR IS DEAD; BUT SOME OF THE UNCERTAINTY REGARDING HIS STAYING POWER INDUCED BY THIS EPISODE IS LIKELY TO ENDURE.

5. IN SOME INSTANCES CIVILIAN AND MILITARY ELEMENTS OF THE GOVERNMENT ARE CLEARLY USING PRESSURE TACTICS. THE GOVERNORS OF KAMPOT AND TAKEO REFUSED TO ALLOW CANVASSING FOR IN TAM IN THEIR PROVINCES; GOVERNOR OF BATTAMBANG PROHIBITED CYCLOPOUSSE DRIVERS FROM CARRYING IN TAM CANVASSERS, AND EMBASSY EMPLOYEES HAVE CONFIRMED OPPOSITION PARTY REPORTS THAT SOLDIERS CANVASSING FOR LON NOL HAVE THREATENED THOSE WHO VOTED FOR IN TAM WITH REPRISALS, AND IN A FEW CASES HAVE ROUGHED UP CITIZENS WHO REFUSED TO ACCEPT LON NOL LEAFLETS. IN MILITARY CAMPS COMMANDERS, FEARFUL LEST THEIR UNITS EMERGE IN THE COUNT AS

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"ANTI-LON NOL UNITS", ARE PUTTING HEAVY PRESSURE ON THE MEN. THROUGHT THE DEVELOPMENT BANKS THE GOVERNMENT IS DISTRIBUTING 12 MILLION IN NON-REPAYABLE LOANS TO GENERAL MOBILIZATION AND OTHER COOPERATING CAMPAIGN WORKERS.

6. EMBASSY CONTACTS AMONG MIDDLE-LEVEL OFFICIALS WHO ARE RELUCTANTLY INCLINED TO VOTE FOR THE MARSHAL IN INTERESTS OF CIVIL PEACE ARE DISPLAYING INCREASING IRRITATION OVER WHAT THEY VIEW AS INTIMIDATING GOVERNMENT AND ARMY PRESSURE TO VOTE FOR THE MARSHAL. IN TAM'J NEWSPAPER (KHMER ANGKOR) DREW PARALLEL WITH 99 PERCENT VICTORY OF SIHANOUK IN 1955 DESPITE PROGNOSIS OF OPPOSITION VICTORY. BUT THERE IS NO EVIDENCE OF DEFECTIONS FROM THE LON NOL RANKS; ON THE CONTRARY THEY APPEAR TO BE GROWING.

7. "SIHANOUKIST" CANDIDATE KEO AN WAS LARGELY INACTIVE DURING THE WEEK. HE HAS NO ORGANIZATION AND HIS PROGRAM IS NO MORE THAN A RAMBLING SEQUENCE OF ALTRUISTIC CLICHES. ALTHOUGH IT FAILS TO MENTION SIHANOUK, AND OPPOSES A "RETRUN TO FEUDAL MONARCHY" OR DICTATORSHIP, KEO AN'S MAIN CLAIM FOR VOTES RESTS ON HIS STATEMENT AT THE START OF THE CAMPAIGN THAT IF ELECTED HE WOULD BRING SIHANOUK BACK AS A PRIVATE CITIZEN. HIS CANDIDACY IS HARDLY A GUAGE OF RESIDUAL SUPPORT FOR SIHANOUK, BUT MOST POLITICAL OBSERVERS HERE DO EXPECT HIM TO OBTAIN SOME VOTES BOTH IN TWON AND IN THE COUNTRYSIDE.

8. DESPITE RESENTMENT OF MILITARY-GOVERNMENT CAMPAIGN OVERKILL ALL SIGNS NOW POINT TO A LON NOL VICTORY. AN EDITORIAL OF NEWSPAPER NOKOR THOM, WHICH HAS PUBLISHED MOST OF IN TAM'S STATEMENTS, MAY BE TYPICAL OF REACTION OF AVERAGE LITERATE KHMER: "IN OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES... IF OUR COUNTRY WERE NOT AT WAR, IF THE VIETS HAD LEFT OUR LANDS, I WOULD PERHAPS VOTE FOR IN TAM. BUT IN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES I AM VOTING FOR MARSHAL LON LON, AND THIS DESPITE THE SYMPATHY I HAVE FOR IN TAM. WHY? BECAUSE THE PRESENT SITUATION OF THE COUNTRY DOES NOT PERMIT ME ANY OTHER CHOICE."

9. ON JUNE 1 THE GOVERNMENT DECREED AN EXPANISION OF

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ARTICLE 56 OF THE DECREE ON THE ELECTORAL LAW NO. 20/72/PRK
OF MAY 12 BY STIPULATING THAT CANDIDATES WISHING TO
CONTEST THE ELECTION RESULTS MUST SUBMIT THEIR APPLICATION
AND PROOFS BY 6 P.M. JUNE 7, WHICH PROVIDES 30 HOURS IN
WHICH TO PREPARE THE CASE FOLLOWING THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF
RESULTS AT NOON JUNE 6. THE PREVIOUS WORDING OF
ARTICLE 56 FIXED NO DEADLINE.
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